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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 005897

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/16/2013

TAGS: MOPS PREL TU GR CY

SUBJECT: TURKEY OPEN TO CANCELING FALL MILITARY EXERCISES
ON CYPRUS

REF: A. STATE 257142

1B. ATHENS 3133

1C. NICOSIA 1827

1D. ATHENS 2619

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch, reasons 1.5, b/d.

¶1. (C) Summary: In receiving Ref A demarche, GOT interlocutors from MFA and TGS did not push back on canceling this year's Toros/Barbaros exercise and expressed openness to following past practice of mirroring the Greek activities. However, they were characteristically unwilling to commit to doing so prior to knowing what Athens' plans were. End Summary.

¶2. (C) In a September 11 meeting with MFA DG for Eastern Med Affairs Necip Eguz, Pol-Mil Counselor urged the GOT to follow the precedent established over the last two years of mirroring the Toxotis/Nikiforos activities of Greece and Cyprus. Pol-Mil Counselor noted we were delivering the same message of restraint in Athens and Nicosia. He told Eguz it would be helpful if the Greeks knew before they conducted their exercise what Turkish intentions were. Eguz laughed and said "They will never know." He did commit to staffing the request and remarked that he "did not see any reason why we can't repeat the past two years' practice." On Sept. 16, the new TGS/J-5 for Greek and Cypriot Affairs RADM (LH) Mucahit Sislioglu told Pol-Mil Counselor that the issue would have to be referred to the J-3 and the rest of J-5, but that personally he believed canceling the exercise would be prudent so as not to complicate matters prior to the December elections in northern Cyprus.

¶3. (C) On the new CSBMs announced by SYG Robertson (Ref D), Eguz said the GOT is always looking for new initiatives, big and small, on which the GOT and GOG can work together. He agreed that the fact that these new CSBMs were in mil-mil channels was a particularly encouraging development, as the other channels were already working well. Eguz added as evidence that he expected the negotiations on a double taxation treaty to be concluded soon. Sislioglu noted that the CSBMs announced by Robertson were "slow but continuing." He added that there are many such papers, and one of his major goals is to accelerate implementation.

¶4. (C) Comment: Neither Eguz nor Sislioglu were surprised to hear our points, and both were more open about speculating that Turkey would probably mirror Greece than Sislioglu's predecessor and Eguz were last year prior to the exercises. While last year, MFA and TGS seemed intent on keeping the Greeks guessing, this year both were relatively nonchalant about the issue. We do not expect the Turks to upset the current balance by changing the policy of mirroring the Greeks, but neither do we expect they will take the high road of announcing their cancellation before they witness what the Greeks do during their exercise.

EDELMAN